

GOD'S Love For Man Unfailing Despite Mankind's Rebellion

In the Old Testament God's Anger Was Emphasized and This Christ Had to Combat in Teaching the Father's Love for His People.

By Rev. W. H. DUNCAN, Pastor of the Alta Vista Methodist Church.

Text, "For, if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God, through the death of his son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." Rom. viii.

THE supreme labor of the New Testament scriptures is to know or to prove, not so much to man's intellect, but to his heart, that God loves all men. The very language of its opening pages discloses this fact. Even the genealogy of Christ seems to be freighted with this thought. It shows that through all the dated centuries of the pre-Christian era God had kept a complete roster of souls whom he had chosen as concrete proofs of his unfailing love for the race. For in this list of immortals are the names of men and women who had blessed their generation with the reflection of God's love and interest in humanity. They are as monuments of God's love and his providence over us.

These heavenly visitors who came to Bethlehem as guests of honor at the birth of Christ bore nothing but messages of love from God to his family on earth. "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace and good will to men," was the chorus of that natal song they sang. The very first text that Jesus took when he began to preach was, "For God so loved the world." And the last lingering words before he ascended to his father and ours were tales with tender assurances of the unfailing love of the Triune God.

Worthy of the Effort. This was a task worthy of all the treatment it received at the hand of Christ and those who figure in the drama of the New Testament scrip-

tures. For it was a task that only Christ and his followers could accomplish. And see what it cost them to accomplish it. See what they had to combat in this struggle. Every outward manifestation in nature seems to belie this fact. The very elements seem to sport with man, as a lion with his prey. Man's inhumanity to man in fact God himself was known more for his fierce anger and wrath than for any other quality of his being. Hence Christ had a herculean task when he undertook to prove that "God is love."

In the text here Paul is trying to prove to the Roman Christians whom he had not seen in the flesh, that God is love. And his assurance to them is conveyed in this way:

"For, if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God, through the death of his son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." Here we have a statement of our relationship to God before the death of Christ.

True to the Facts.

And this statement is true to the facts of the common notion. The race had of God before the death of Christ was that God and man were enemies. There are no grounds for denying this fact. If you will look up the reference in the Old Testament you will be surprised, perhaps, to find how many times the idea of God's hostility to man appears. In all the prophecies God has a quarrel with his people. He is angry with them. "Zion, my people, I have nourished and brought up children and they have rebelled against me." Your new moon and your solemn feasts, even their very efforts to worship him, my soul hateth; they are a trouble to me. I am weary to bear them." It is no more

fancy of men that God had a controversy with his people. And I take it that this hostility was mutual. We are guilty with sin and that made us enemies to God. It was not a one-sided affair, for David said: "God judgeth (evens) the righteous, and he is angry with the wicked every day."

Yes, this enmity was mutual we were enemies. If the righteous hostility of God rested upon us. We were enemies in a positive sense, for we were aggressive sinners. I know of no healthier occupation for saved men than to humble themselves by frequent reflection upon those times when they were aggressive enemies to God. When we view the emblems of our Lord's sufferings it ought always remind us of what it cost God to settle this controversy. It ought to produce in us the profoundest penitence for our sins. For his kindred's sake, for the awful tragedy that resulted from our rebellion against God. It is not to be compared with anything in human history. If we consider that the bloody four years struggle between the states was the price of rebellion against a beneficent government, and the havoc wrought was the result of that rebellion, we have a very weak imitation of the tragic results of our rebellion against God. We see that the son of God hanging on his cross. What a price was paid to reconcile us to God.

Second Smiles Christ.

When Christ was made man under the law, to become an atonement by which this enmity was to be forever settled, the most awful voice that was ever heard in the universe sounded out: "Awake, O sword against the man who is my fellow, and smite the Shepherd—smite him!"

When Christ came there was a man who was God's sword, and who was able to bear the fierceness of almighty retribution, in smiting whom justice could obtain its full demands. Hence the sword of justice smote him, beat him, cut him! It had a commission to smite him, the man who was John the Baptist's fellow; it smote him in Bethlehem; it smote him all along the highways of his mortal life, even up to Calvary. On Calvary the sword of the sword fell thick and fast; the glances of that sword which Adam saw in the garden were so terrible that he fled from the sun; they shook the earth, and hell. It kept smiting till the man who was John the Baptist's fellow, cried out: "It is finished." Then the sword dropped from the hand of justice at the foot of the cross, silenced, lulled and pacified. There it lay till the time of morning after, when it was changed into mercy and thus it had been waving over mankind ever since, a sword of mercy. This all happened while we were yet enemies to God.

Blessed Assurance.

Now the blessed assurance follows. The argument of the apostle is this: As sure as when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God, through the death of his son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. That is, if God undertook to save us through the death of his son, how loved us in spite of our fierce enmity, through the death of his son, how much more will he save us, who have received the living Christ himself into our hearts by faith!

An Illustration.

Maybe a picture will help us to see the force of this argument. A criminal is brought before your court. He is accused of treason against the state. The evidence is well established against him. No doubt remains that he has committed treason and outraged justice. The judge feels and owns his guilt; and when the indictment is read, with an outburst of grief, he exclaims: "I am guilty, and in the name of God I throw myself upon the mercy of the court." The court is touched by this cry for mercy and the crime is forgiven. The criminal is finally set free. Afterward the criminal is reformed and becomes a useful, loyal, patriotic citizen. He takes his stand for righteousness. In a thousand ways he proves his love for his state, his country. Finally he is exposed to danger. Some foe is seeking to despoil and oppress him. Now, if the state showed such mercy to him while a confessed traitor, will it not now do to his relief, and stake its army and its wealth to protect his life?

If God, through the death of his son, found himself able to forgive us when we knelt at the mercy seat in penitence, will he not much more keep us throughout the dread storms of this mortal life and sustain us at the judgment, since we have been transformed from enemies to friends, through the death of his son? This is sufficient assurance to make every heart full with joy and peace, under the most trying temptations of this tempestuous life.

One Thing Not Denied.

The apostle makes this fact as sure as the fact of Christ's death. There is nothing more surely established in human history than the tragic death of the son of God. No man denies that Jesus of Nazareth died on Calvary. They may deny most everything else connected with the wonderful story of Jesus, but this fact is universally conceded. Now, the safety of the believer is as sure as this impeachable history.

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OPEN AIR SERVICES ARE TO BEGIN ON SUNDAY

Religious Meetings in Cleveland Square Will Be Carried on All Summer.

The open air union religious services in Cleveland Square will begin Sunday evening and continue throughout the summer. The service will begin at 7:30 o'clock. A large chorus choir, composed of young people from the various participating churches, will lead in the song service. A male quartet, composed of Messrs. W. H. Rogers, Christian and Harrington will render two special selections. The whole musical program, which will be a feature of the service, will be in charge of Mr. W. H. Rogers. Pastor Perry J. Rice will deliver the sermon. The services will be open to all church people not under obligation to their own individual church services, to transient and non-church people and to the public in general. In case of a storm the service will be held in the First Christian church, corner of Oregon and Franklin streets.

First Christian Church.
At the First Christian church, corner North Oregon and Franklin streets, Rev. Perry J. Rice, pastor, services will be held Sunday as follows: Sunday school at 9:30 a. m.; communion at 10:45, followed by the singing of the hymns and the preaching service. Christian Endeavor meets at 6:30. In the morning the pastor will preach as usual. In the evening the church will join in the union open air service in Cleveland square.

Austin Park Christian.
At the Austin Park church of Christ, corner of Colorado and Montana streets, Rev. J. H. Allen, pastor, announces services Sunday as follows: Bible school at 9:30 a. m.; communion at 10:45, and preaching at 11:15. Endeavor meets at 6:30. In the morning the pastor will preach both morning and evening. The morning subject will be "The Way of Life," as illustrated by the Cleudcroft Railroad. In the evening, "The Safe Way," will be the sermon subject.

First Methodist Episcopal.
At the First Methodist Episcopal church, corner Myrtle avenue and Oregon street, Rev. Herman Forting pastor, will preach at both morning and evening services. In the morning at 11 o'clock, his subject will be, "Safety First." There will be an anthem by the choir, and a solo, "Behold What Manner of Love" (MacDermid) by Henry P. Duncan. In the evening at 8 o'clock the subject will be, "Safety First—Warnings." There will be an anthem, "Thou Didst Leave Thy Father's House" (Schrock) and a solo, "Remember When the World Forsook" (Carrie Jacobs Bond) by Mrs. R. J. Epworth. Sunday school at 9:45 a. m. Epworth League meets at 7 p. m. Prayer service at the church Wednesday at 8 p. m.

Trinity Methodist Church.
At the Trinity Methodist church, corner Boulevard and Mesa streets, Rev. C. Wesley Weddell, pastor, announces Sunday services as follows: Sunday school at 9:30 a. m.; preaching at 10:45 a. m. and 8 p. m.; Epworth League at 7 p. m. At the morning hour the subject will be, "Safety First." At the evening hour the pastor will preach on "A Pagan King Led of God to Further the Spiritual Kingdom on Earth." At the 11 o'clock morning hour will consist of an anthem, "A Little Talk With Jesus" (Julian Mooreman), with a special number, "O My Jesus" (Fanny Crosby). In the evening, "This is a Land of Pure Delight" (Shelley) will be rendered, together with a solo, "When I Looked Out the Light" (Gibbs) by Mrs. W. W. Evans.

Highland Park Methodist.
At the Highland Park Methodist church, Rev. W. H. Rogers, pastor, Sunday school meets at 9:45 a. m., conducted by C. W. Bretz, superintendent. There will be preaching at 11 a. m. and 8 p. m. The theme for the morning hour will be, "Who Are Christians?" "Greeting the Spirit" is the subject for the evening service. A very successful meeting has been in progress at this church and members will be received into the church.

Alta Vista Methodist.
At the Alta Vista Methodist church, 2216 Hines street, the pastor, Rev. W. H. Duncan, pastor, announces services Sunday as follows: Sunday school at 9:45 a. m.; preaching at 11 a. m. and 8 p. m.; Senior League meets at 7 p. m. The services at night will be evangelistic and at their close new members will be received into the church.

East El Paso Methodist.
At the East El Paso Methodist church, South corner of Grant and El Paso streets, the pastor, H. P. Bond, announces services Sunday as follows: Sunday school at 9:45 a. m.; preaching at 11 a. m. and 8 p. m.; Senior League meets at 7 p. m. The services at night will be evangelistic and at their close new members will be received into the church.

First Presbyterian Church.
At the First Presbyterian church, corner of Boulevard and Stanton streets, Rev. Charles L. Vincent, pastor, Sunday services will be as follows: Morning worship at 10:45 o'clock, with a sermon by Rev. Robert McLane, D. D., who is in charge of the Mexican mission work of this church. The choir will be assisted by a three piece stringed orchestra. Sabbath school at 9:30 o'clock. T. P. C. E. meets at 6:45 o'clock. There will be no evening service at the church. The congregation is expected to attend the open air union services, which will be held in Cleveland square Sunday nights until September.

Westminster Church.
At the Westminster church, located at the corner of Florence and Rio Grande streets, Rev. John E. Abbott, the pastor, will preach Sunday at 11 a. m. and 8 p. m. In the morning he will speak on "God's People and God's Power." At this service there will be an anthem by the choir, "Christ Crucified." Communion by Lorens. In the evening the subject of the sermon will be "Familiarity and Exaltation." Mrs. E. C. Conover will sing a solo, "Defend Us, O Lord," by Metcalf. Sunday school will meet at 9:45 a. m.; Intermediate Christian Endeavor at 6:30 a. m., and Senior Endeavor at 7 p. m.

First Baptist Church.
At the First Baptist church, corner of Main and Virginia streets, Rev. J. P. Williams, pastor, announces services Sunday as follows: Morning sermon, subject, "The Conversion of the World," by the pastor. "The Only Cleansing Power for Sin, the Blood of Jesus Christ," Sunday school at 9:45 a. m.; Prof. G. E. Putnam, superintendent. Subject, "Furnishing of the Spirit Filled Man." Prayer meeting Wednesday night at 8 o'clock. Subject, "The Birth of Jesus Christ."

Highland Park Baptist.
At the Highland Park Baptist church, Rev. A. E. Boyd, pastor, services Sunday will be as follows: Sunday school at 10 a. m.; preaching at 11 a. m. by the pastor. Sermon subject, "The Conquering Hosts of God." R. T. H. meets at 7 p. m. and there will be preaching at 8 p. m. At the close of the evening service there will be baptism.

Grand View Baptist Mission.
At the Grand View Baptist Mission, corner of Idaho and Miles streets, Rev. S. L. Holbrook, minister, Sunday school meets at 2 p. m. R. M. Denman is superintendent. There will be a religious conference at 7 p. m.

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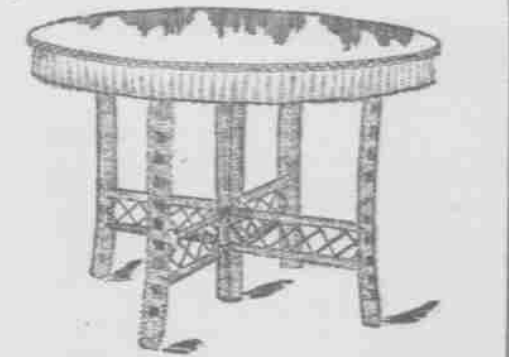
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